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UNCLAS SANTIAGO 002403

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, WHA/EPSC
STATE FOR INR/IAA, PM, INL

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - LATIN AMERICA

On November 25, conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 102.000) carried a column by political scientists Boris Yopo entitled, "Latin America: Ideological Coexistence?" Quote:

"The recent conflict between Presidents Chavez and Fox...reflects something that is not new to Latin America: the coexistence of regimes with different ideological and political projects. The leftist turn (albeit distinct lefts) that many countries in the region have experienced is tied to a growing disapproval of the Bush administration's global and regional policies...and to the consequences of the 'Washington Consensus,' which many see as the cause of regional economic deterioration and inequality.... This political and economic divergence...makes it difficult to come up with long-term joint strategies to face today's challenges.... In addition, the instability, precarious governance, and high degree of social conflict in many countries in the region today is a temptation to 'externalize' their problems.... This tends to make the resolution of any regional issue into a 'zero-sum' equation, where one wins at the political and economic expense of another.... This also threatens the region's ability to negotiate in the international arena.... Other international actors have some degree of influence because...they have developed long-term policies to promote economic and political integration. If our region does not take a similar approach we will probably become the major losers in this century's new world order."

KELLY